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Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIPOL 00635 150041 Z

67
ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 IO-12 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 VO-03 SCA-01 PPT-02 CPR-02 EB-11

CU-04 RSR-01 /156 W
---------- 060266
P R 141108 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0069
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USINT CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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E. O. 11652: NA
TAGS: CPAS CVIS NATO LY US
SUBJECT: PASSPORTS: DEMARCHE BY DEAN OF DPL CORPS

REF: TRIPOLI 062 4

SUMMARY: DEAN OF OUR DPL CORPS HERE, SAUDI AMB AL- ZAYD,
CALLED ON ACTING FONMIN OBEIDI MAY 12 AND THEN CONVENED
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PAGE 02 TRIPOL 00635 150041 Z

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

CONCERNED COM' S MAY 13 TO REPORT. OBEIDI APPARENTLY TOOK HARD LINE WITH AL - ZAYD, IN EFFECT ASKING FOR CAPITULATION OF RESISTANCE TO PRINTING FOREIGN PASSPORTS IN ARABIC. AL- ZAYD ALSO UNSUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING ANY MORATORIUM ON REGS RE RESIDENT DIPLOMATS. REACTION OF COM' S AT MAY 13 MEETING WAS ONE OF ANGER, DETERMINATION AND SOME AMUSEMENT AT RIDICULOUS POSITION IN WHICH WE ARE PUT. END SUMMARY.

1. AS REPORTED REFTEL PARA 2, AL- ZAYD HAD APPT WITH OBEIDI MAY 12. HE THEN CAL-
LED MEETING MAY 13 OF RESIDENT
COM' S OF ALL COUNTRIES NOT PRINTING THEIR PASSPORTS IN ARABIC. THERE ARE OVER 30 AND NEARLY 30 ATTENDED. NOTABLE ABSENCES WERE OF ANY REPS OF FRANCE, NIGER, CHAD, AND MALTA. LATTER THREE THINK THEY HAVE MADE A DEAL WITH LARG, AND POSITION OF FRANCE IS NOT SO CLEAR BUT OBVIOUSLY PREFERENTIAL.

2. UN RES REP ADLY (SYRIAN) ALSO PRESENT AND INTERPRETED FROM AND TO AL- ZAYD, WHO KNOWS NO ENGLISH. FULL DETAILS MAY NOT HAVE COME THROUGH. E. G., HEARD NOTHING OF HARD LINE AL- ZAYD REPORTEDLY WAS GOING TO TAKE (REFTEL PARA 2).

3. WHAT DID COME THROUGH CLEARLY WAS OBEIDI' S LINE: ALL THAT IS REQUIRED IS FOR FOREIGN GOVTS TO " ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE" OF ARABIC IN THEIR PASSPORTS. ONCE THIS DONE, AS IN CASES OF NIGER, CHAD AND MALTA, " THE DETAILS CAN BE WORKED OUT." THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE ON THE ISSUE OF PRINCIPLE " AS IT IS AN RCC DECISION". NO ONE, OBEIDI INCLUDED, CAN ALTER THIS DECISION. BUT IF GOVTS SHOW A WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE, OBEIDI WILL BE WILLING TO TRY TO SECURE RCC ACCEPTANCE. COMPROMISE COULD TAKE FORM OF RUBBER STAMP LIKE THE MALTESE ONE, WHICH IS PLACED ON A PAGE OF PASSPORT. LARG WOULD PERHAPS BE WILLING TO RECIPROCATE BY PLACING SIMILAR STAMP IN OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE UN ON A PAGE OF LIBYAN PASSPORTS IN ARABIC ONLY. (UK AMB TRIPP HAD HEARD SOMETHING SIMILAR FROM MFA' S BABA LAST WEEK, BUT BABA HAD BEEN CLEAR THAT THIS NO MORE THAN A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TEMPORARY SOLUTION UNTIL PASSPORTS PRINTED OR TYPED IN ARABIC.) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION, AL- ZAYD SAID HE HAD POINTED OUT ALL THIS TAKES TIME, AT BEST, AND THAT MEANWHILE RESIDENT DIPLOMATS SHOULD BE ALLOWED NORMAL TRAVEL. OBEIDI HAD BEEN ADAMANT THAT THERE COULD BE NO MORATORIUM.

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

4. FROM THE START, AND INCREASINGLY, REACTION OF ASSEMBLED DIPS, MOSTLY AMBS, WAS ANGER MIXED WITH AMUSEMENT. OBEIDI HAD MERELY CONFIRMED WHAT WE KNEW WAS THE SITUATION, OFFERED NOTHING NEW, AND MOREOVER ADMITTED HE WAS POWERLESS EVEN IF HE HAD THE WILL TO HELP. NATO COM' S DID MOST OF QUESTIONING AND TALKING, BUT ALSO AT LEAST THREE EASTERN EUROPEANS COMMENTED. POINTS MADE WERE: OBDEIDI WAS REALLY CALLED FOR " SURRENDER". WE SHOULD NOT AND WOULD NOT " NEGOTIATE UNDER PRESSURE". THERE WAS NO ASSURANCE THAT ANY COMPROMISE REACHED WOULD LAST. SINCE OBEIDI WAS ONLY AN INSTRUMENT WE SHOULD BYPASS HIM FOR THE RCC.

5. GREEK AMB SAID HE NEEDED GO TO ATHENS TO CONSULT ON PASSPORT PROBLEM, BUT HOW COULD HE RETURN TO POST? WOULD AL - ZAYD TAKE THE TRIP FOR HIM? AMID LAUGHTER, AL- ZAYD SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO VISIT ATHENS.

6. UK AMB TRIPP FINALLY SUGGESTED WE EACH REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS FROM OUR GOVTS AND IN DUE TIME MEET WITH AL- ZAYD AGAIN SO THT HE COULD RETURN TO OBEIDI WITH OUR ANSWER OR ANSWERS. FOR LACK OF ANY OTHER SUGGESTION EXCEPT THAT PM JALLUD BE APPROACHED INSTEAD, THE MEETING ENDED ON THIS NOTE.

7. COMMENT: HAVE NOT SEEN TRIPP SINCE THE MEETING BUT ASSUME HIS MOTIVE WAS TO END THIS FARCE WITHOUT HURTING AL- ZAYD' S FEELINGS. CERTAINLY OUR USUALLY ABSENT AND OTHERWISE SOMNOLENT DEAN DESERVES CREDIT FOR ROUSING HIMSELF. MOREOVER, IN HIS INTRODUCTORY REMARKS HE MENTIONED ONLY ME AND THE DUTCH CHARGE AS HAVING INSPIRED HIM TO RISE TO THE OCCASION.

8. I AM OF COURSE BEGINNING TO HAVE REGRETS. AL- ZAYD

IS A WEAK REED, WHICH I KNEW, BUT BEYOND THAT OBEIDI SEEMS TO HAVE TRIED TO MAKE HIM ANOTHER SOUNDING BOARD FOR LARG INTRANSIGENCE AND WILES. ONLY ENCOURAGING THING WAS GENERAL REACTION OF ASSEMBLED COM' S AND THEIR APPARENT DETERMINATION NOT TO BUY ANY WOODEN NICHOLS. SIGNS WERE ANY STIFF NATO POSITION BASED ON RECIPROCITY COULD BE BROADENED VERY SIGNIFICANTLY, ALMOST CERTAINLY TO EASTERN EUROPE. INDIANS, PAKISTANIS, AND SOME OTHERS ARE STILL UNRELIABLE, AM SURE, BUT NEITHER DO WE NEED THEM.
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